L
N520
A63p
DC
no. 6

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

CLASSICAL ART

LATE GREEK ROOM

BRONZES

VI

CLASSICAL ART

Late Greek Room: Bronzes

Department of Classical Art
Gallery Guide no. 6

Books and photographs relating to the branch of art described in this book are open to use by all visitors in the Library of the Museum, over the Huntington Avenue Entrance.

Copies of this book may be obtained at the Sales Office at the Huntington Avenue Entrance. Price: 25 cents each.

CLASSICAL ART.

Late Greek Room.

Bronzes.

Case 5 (east end of room).

Top Shelf, west side, left to right.

Statuette. Greek. Fourth Century B. C.

Aphrodite.

Greek art of the fourth century B. C. reveals a growing interest in the study of the nude female form and in securing pleasing and harmonious effects by posing figures in graceful attitudes. Aphrodite is a favorite subject, and this statuette shows how skilled artists of the period were in suggesting the ideal loveliness of the goddess under the guise of a mortal woman in a natural and unaffected posture. The figure stands at ease as if pausing to speak, with the head slightly bent forward and with a simple gesture of the hands. The base, ornately moulded and engraved, is antique, but originally belonged to a somewhat larger statuette.

Patera (shallow dish). Etruscan. Fourth Century, B. C.

The shallow bowl is set edgewise on a spreading yoke supported by the graceful figure of a girl, represented as an athlete, standing on a small triangular base. She wears boots, has her hair tied up in a kerchief, and carries an object, apparently a strigil (flesh-scraper) in her right hand. There is a ring for suspension below the handle, and another on the upper edge of the dish.

Left foot of a statuette. Greek. Fourth Century, B. C. From Lykosoura.

The foot is delicately modelled and has a fine brown patina.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Hermes (Mercury).

From the middle of the second century B. C., through the earlier part of the Imperial Period, most of the objects produced for Roman patrons were made by Greek artists, or by Romans who had learned their methods and who drew their inspiration from Greek teachers and Greek models. In its proportions this statuette of Hermes recalls the work of the fifth century B. C., and for this reason as well as for the excellent modelling and careful finish, it takes high rank among the bronzes of the period to which it is ascribed. The special attributes of the god have been lost, but it is certain that he carried in his left hand the wand (caduceus, kerykeion) which symbolized his office as herald of Zeus; in his extended right hand was probably a purse indicating his function as protector of merchants. During the archaic period, Hermes is generally represented with a beard (compare two statuettes from Arkadia in the Archaic Room, Case 4), but in later art this god is always youthful (compare the figure of Hermes in the First Marble Room, west end).

Case 5.

Second Shelf, west side, left to right.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Hermes (Mercury).

The wings once attached to his head, the wand which was held in his left hand, and the fingers of his right hand with the purse or patera which they held are missing.

Vase with cover. Etruscan.

The vase is pear-shaped, and instead of a handle has a chain for suspension. A chain is also used to attach the cover.

Statuette. Italiote.

Hermes (Mercury) advances holding out a money-pouch; the herald's wand is missing from

his left hand. To suggest speed and his association with the winds, Hermes is often represented with wings on his sandals or on his feet, or as here, in his hair. The face of this figure is of a type which indicates an Italian rather than a Greek origin. The base, though antique, does not belong with the statuette.

Ornament. Greek.

Corinthian capital. Four tendrils, from which the spiral ends have been broken off, spring from a double row of acanthus leaves and support an abacus with strongly concave sides. Between each pair of tendrils is a large acanthus leaf, above which is a flower. This is a rare, possibly a unique specimen of a bronze Corinthian capital.

Oinochoe (wine jug) with trefoil mouth. Late Greek or Roman.

On the plaque at the base of the tall handle is a chubby Eros (Cupid) with an inverted torch, dancing.

Statuette. Greek. Fourth or third century B. C.

A young satyr, running.

Foot of a cista (toilet-box). Etruscan.

Cylindrical boxes of bronze for containing various articles of the toilet were supported on three feet, generally in the form of a lion's paw. Above this paw rises a calyx from which emerges the head of a winged lion. (A cista is shown in a separate case against the north wall).

Head from a statuette. Greek. Late fourth century, B. C.

This head of Eros, or of a woman, is closely wrapped in a cloak with only the face exposed, in a manner typical of many of the terra-cotta figurines from Tanagra, which date from the Hellenistic period. The eyes, with incised pupils, are wide open and the gaze is directed upward, in a manner typical of Hellenistic art.

Case 5, South End.

Pitcher with large, oval mouth. Greek.

The handle terminates below in the mask of a Satyr. The body of the pitcher has acquired an attractive deep green patina. The handle belonged originally to another vase of similar size and shape.

Forearm and hand. Greek.

This is a fragment of an athletic figure, and the object held in the closed hand is perhaps part of a strigil (flesh-scraper). The careful modelling of the muscles is evidence of Hellenistic date.

Case 5, East side, left to right.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Aphrodite.

In its attitude and gesture, this figure resembles the Capitoline Venus. The goddess is prepared for the bath and is aware of human spectators.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Athena heavily draped and wearing the aegis, as usual, over her breast. From the helmet, which is inlaid with silver, the crest is missing. The hands have been injured; in the left was probably held a spear.

Handle of a vase. Etruscan.

A youth lies with his right hand under his head and his left hand on his thigh, making a bridge of his body between two supports which rise from an ornate plaque once attached to the side of a vase. The plaque has the form of a half-ellipse and is decorated with a palmette and the heads of two rams. The other handle of the pair to which this belonged is in the Antiquarium in Berlin.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Zeus (Jupiter) seated, wearing cloak and sandals and holding a thunderbolt in his right hand. The raised left hand was originally supported by a sceptre. The eyes were inserted. The throne or seat was a separate piece, and is lost.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Asklepios, the god of healing, stands partly draped in a voluminous cloak; his snake coils about the staff held at his left side. The base is modern.

Statuette. Greek. Hellenistic.

Dionysos.

This statuette was found in lower Egypt and recalls the widespread influence of Greek civilization which followed the conquests of Alexander the Great. The god is represented as a youth crowned with a wreath of ivy. On his feet were high boots (endromides). The relaxed pose of the figure and the softness of the flesh are typical of later Greek art. There is evidence, especially in the hair, of a careful use of the graver in finishing the surface of the statuette after it was cast.

Fragment of a silver statuette. Greek.

The left leg and foot of a draped, seated figure of Zeus.

The folds of the drapery are in the style of the fourth century B. C. Traces of gilding remain.

Case 5, North end.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

A youth standing. The head is missing, and the object held in the left hand has been broken away. The figure wears high boots (endromides). The patina is dark green, smooth and lustrous.

Two handles (fastened against the background).

The larger handle from a vase or pitcher terminates at the bottom in the mask of a young Triton, above which is the head of a dog.

The smaller handle was attached to the cover of a cista (toilet box) and is in the form of a youthful acrobat, lying face upward with arched body.

Case 6, west end of room

Top Shelf, east side, left to right.

Statuette.

Apollo. The inclination of the body indicates that the god was leaning against a support at his left, probably in the form of a low pillar on which his lyre rested. The statuette seems to have been made in Roman times, but it is an exceptionally vigorous and careful reproduction on a small scale of a type developed in Greek sculpture under the influence of Praxitèles in the first half of the fourth century B. C.

Statuette. Greek. Late Hellenistic.

Pan was pre-eminently the god of herdsmen, and he is here represented with characteristic goat-like features, pointed ears, bushy hair and beard, hairy legs and a tail. He smiles as he raises a syrinx, his pipe of reeds, toward his mouth. The elaboration of anatomical details is typical of late Greek work.

Pitcher. Greek.

The middle section of the trefoil lip is prolonged into a spout. The handle ends on the rim in two reclining panthers, and its lower attachment is a large inverted palmette, depending from scrolls. Part of the body retains its original golden lustre.

Statuette of silver. Graeco-Roman.

Hermes (Mercury) seated on a rock. He wears

winged sandals and there are wings in his hair; his left hand rests on the back of a tortoise, one of the animals sacred to this god; in the other hand he holds a purse.

Statuette. Greek. Hellenistic.

Aphrodite stands in an attitude adapted from the pose of the Knidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles. The harmony of the composition and the beauty of its lines are best observed from the back, because the hands, though carefully modelled, are unnaturally large and give a disturbing sense of disproportion to the whole figure, as seen from the front. From each ear hangs a pearl, suspended on a twisted gold wire. The base is antique and belongs with the statuette.

Case 6, Second shelf, east side, left to right.

Statuette. Faliscan. Fourth or third century B. C.

Strength and grace are admirably combined in this athletic figure of a girl who carried some large object, the base of which remains upon her head, supporting it also firmly with both lifted hands. She wears a fillet, a necklace with a circular bulla, or amulet, and with two pendants; on her feet are low shoes. A Faliscan origin is ascribed to this statuette. The Faliscans were a people of Italian stock living in Southern Etruria and under the influence of the Etruscans. Their independent artistic activity ceased after their conquest by the Romans in 241 B. C.

Ornament. Roman.

Triton.

The bronze is gilded and once served as an ornament fastened to some object.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Herakles resting; his club in his left hand; in his right hand a wine cup. The figure was once attached to some object.

Foot of a statue. Greek or Graeco-Roman.

The ornate sandal is fastened with an elaborate arrangement of straps and laces.

Spout. Roman.

In the form of a lion's head.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Found in the valley of the Rhine, not far from Coblenz, this statuette is a relic of the extension of Roman imperial power over western Germany. It reproduces a sculptural type of the fifth century B. C. A distinguished scholar has conjectured that it is a copy of the Athena Promachos of Pheidias, the colossal statue of bronze which stood on the Acropolis of Athens. The arrangement of the dress recalls that of other statues of Athena which are attributed to Pheidias and his associates. The width of the aegis, enveloping the body like a cloak, is unusual in sculpture. The goddess held her spear in the left hand. The attitude of the figure has a constraint which is probably to be attributed to the copyist.

Case 6, North end.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Bull standing with head erect. Modelled with spirit, but badly proportioned.

Case 6, Top Shelf, west side, left to right.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

A comic actor, with a mask, declaiming. Masks worn by performers on the Roman stage served not only to indicate different types of "stock characters", but were so constructed that they also helped to increase the volume and resonance of the performer's voice.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

A human-headed serpent coiled upon itself, with head erect. It represents Glykon, the reincarnate god Asklepios, whose worship and oracle, established about 150 A. D., flourished for a century or more in Asia Minor and even reached Rome. An entertaining account of the origin of the cult is given in Lucian's "Alexander, or the False Prophet."

Glykon also appears on the electrotype reproduction of a coin shown close by, - a bronze of Lucius Verus (161 to 169 A. D.).

Case 6. Second Shelf, west side, left to right.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Apollo standing; he wears a quiver on a strap; in his right hand a phiale (shallow circular disk); in his left hand apparently part of a bow.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Atys, holding a tragic mask above his head. The worship of Atys, the Phrygian nature divinity associated with Kybele, the Great Mother, was introduced into Rome in the reign of Claudius (Emperor 41 to 54 A. D.).

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Poseidon (Neptune). The luxuriant masses of hair and beard are typical of the later Greek and Roman periods, when artists sought by this means to suggest the dignity and superhuman quality of Zeus, Poseidon and of other divinities. The base is modern.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Athlete. The type is of the fourth century B. C., but the figure itself is a work of the Roman period.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

A dwarf wearing a conical cap and holding an

object (perhaps a wine cup of the rhyton shape) pressed against his left shoulder. The base is antique, but originally belonged to another statuette.

Statuette. Greek. Hellenistic.

A young Satyr. He has short horns of silver and a tail, and there are two goat-like protuberances on his neck.

Three statuettes of children reveal sympathetic insight into child-life, and reflect a tendency of the Hellenistic Age to regard transient moods and familiar attitudes as subjects suited to expression in art. One figure is a boy who stands wrapped in a cloak, his chin resting thoughtfully in his right hand. Another boy, also enveloped in a cloak which is blown by the wind, stands with his head sunk on his breast. The third bronze is a group of three sleeping babies huddled together in a heap.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

A bull with head erect, tail curled over the back and one foot lifted from the ground. It was probably a votive offering; the spirited action and vigorous modelling place it distinctly above the average specimens of such votive animals.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

A crouching lioness with her forepaws resting on the head of an ass. The group was attached as a decoration to some object.

Head from a Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

Athena, wearing a triple-crested Corinthian helmet. The type is of the fifth century B. C.

Statuette. Graeco-Roman.

The Egyptian goddess Isis. Her long fringed mantle is fastened in front with a knot peculiar to this costume, which was worn by women who served as

priestesses in her cult. The goddess wears also her appropriate headdress, consisting of a solar disc with the uraeus serpent, the sacred snake of Egypt between horns and feathers. Only the handles remain of the sistrum (rattle) which she held up in her right hand and of the vessel which she once carried in her left hand. The worship of this goddess was introduced into Rome from Egypt in the third or second century B. C., and became extremely popular.

Case 6. Second Shelf, south end.

Silver inkstand. Roman.

The cylindrical body of the stand is decorated with groups of horizontal lines; on the projecting hexagonal top are a wreath, a wave pattern and other designs. The stand is said to have been found at Cologne.

Miniature oinochoë (jug). Greek.

It is solid, and was perhaps used as a weight.

Nine ivory dice, two of which are in an ivory box with a sliding cover, and a die of stone, are of Greek or Roman date.

Cylindrical jar. Etruscan.

The body of the vase has a slightly concave outline; around the lower part is incised a guilloche or braid pattern; the lip has an egg and dart design. The smooth, lustrous turquoise patina is noteworthy.

Two attachments for a swinging handle. Greek.

Fourth century B. C.

The ends of a swinging handle passed through the rings at the top of these supports, which were fastened on opposite sides of a bronze vessel. The mask of Medusa with which each support terminates has inlaid eyes of silver.

Cista (toilet-box). Etruscan. Third century B. C. (In a separate case, north wall).

Most of the round bronze cistae, of which less than a hundred examples are known at the present time, have been found at Palestrina (ancient Praeneste) in Central Italy; but the style and technique of the drawings with which the cylindrical surface and the cover were adorned are the same as those on Etruscan mirrors (see Case 7, Fourth Century Room), and mark these boxes as objects of Etruscan art. The chain handles are attached by rings fastened to the box without regard to the engraved design.

On one side of this cista is shown a camp scene: a bearded warrior, seated on the ground, with his hands tied behind him, is attacked by three youths; two young warriors and an old woman complete the group. At the left and apparently a part of the same subject another young warrior is removing his armor. He has just dismounted from a chariot for which an attendant is caring. A second servant is carrying a large basin of water to a pair of horses, whose heads appear through the window of their stable. The principal figures of the second scene are two Furies pursuing a young man who carries a child upon his shoulder. On the lid is Dionysos surrounded by Maenads and Satyrs. The handle of the lid is lost. The handles are usually in the form of one or more human figures. A lion in high relief crouches on each of the three feet which support the cista. Such boxes often held the small utensils of a lady's toilet - mirrors, perfumes, fillets, unguents and rouge. A number of small objects of the kind usually found in these cistae are exhibited in the same case, - a wooden color box in the shape of a horse's head, a round wooden box containing paste or pigment, a kohl pot or perfume bottle of glass in the form of an alabastron, a double comb of ivory, a small sponge, an oval box of bronze and two long bronze hairpins.

Situla (pail). Greek. Fourth Century B. C.

(In a separate case, west wall).

The upper half of the situla is decorated in the style of the early Hellenistic Period with repoussé designs separated by just enough space to give an unbroken outline to the vessel as seen from either side. On one side sits young Dionysos caressing a panther, behind which a bearded Satyr

comes bringing a wine cup. At the right is a dancing Maenad holding a thyrsos tipped with ivy. Of the other scene little remains except the central figure, which is a seated woman, probably Ariadne. From the character of the decoration it is evident that the pail was a receptacle for wine. Two bails are hooked into a double ring fastened at opposite sides of the rim.